

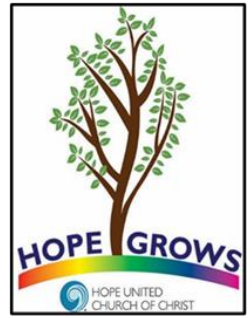
**Hope United Church of Christ Moline, IL  
Worship Bulletin December 3rd, 2023**

**Second Sunday of Advent - Hope**

*Thank you for joining us for worship today.*

*We are glad you are here!*

*Because you are who you are, you are  
welcome here!*



**\*You may stand.**

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE: Candle of Hope

One: The day of God is coming; lift up your voices.  
Cry out with the strength God provides.

**Many: We await God's coming day with anticipation.  
We seek the peace and patience God provides.**

One: Comfort, comfort my people, says our God.  
Speak tenderly to my suffering people.

**Many: We will prepare the way for One who is coming.  
We look forward to baptism in the Spirit.**

One: God will feed us like a shepherd.  
God will gather us in gentle, caring arms.

**Many: God's hand is upon us in blessing and gives us hope;  
We are welcomed by God's steadfast love.**

One: As we light the Candle of Hope we remember God's promise  
of God's presence with us always.

\*OPENING HYMN      NCH #122    *Come O Long Expected Jesus*

\*INVITING GOD INTO OUR MIDST

**Righteous and holy God, your glory is revealed to us day by day as valleys of despair are lifted up and mountainous problems are leveled. In your presence, we see more than our immediate situation. We catch a glimpse of your eternal purposes. So come among us now and speak your word of hope. Feed us with your truth, and equip us to welcome Christ's coming. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of glory, we confess that we have not recognized you in our midst nor listened for your voice. Our faith is fragile, and our iniquity goes unrecognized amid our massive self-concern. We have lived as if we have no need to account for the life we have been given. Our church is focused more on our own survival than on its mission in the world. We come to you today with sincere repentance for our neglect. We have failed to prepare the way for Christ's entry into our everyday environment. Pardon and change us, we pray. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND PASSING OF PEACE

We are created in the image of God and are blessed with the capacity to reflect God's will in our daily lives. God cares for us and invests us with responsibility. Thus, God honors us with high expectations and confidence in our willingness to seek out life's best for all people. We are loved. We are forgiven. Our baptism is renewed.

Let us offer one another the gift of peace. May the Lord's peace be with you! *(If you are using this liturgy as a private devotion or participating in the live stream worship, please hold out your hands in blessing for all you are joined with in spirit. If you are participating in the live stream worship, please type in your peace greeting.)*

## PASTORAL PRAYER/LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

One: May the Lord be with you.

**Many: And also, with you.**

One: Let us pray: ...

With the assurance Jesus offers, together we pray the words Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass;  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers; the flower fades,  
[[when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup> The grass withers; the flower fades,]]  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup> Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”

<sup>10</sup> See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup> He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms  
and carry them in his bosom  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

**\*GOSPEL LESSON:**

Mark 1:1-8

<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,  
“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way,

<sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight,’ ”

<sup>4</sup> so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

SERMON     *Gift of the Heart: Hope*  
                  *an interview with Rev. Laura Evans Mahn*

SERMON HYMN     NCH #115     *The Baptist Shouts on Jordan’s Shore*

MISSION MINUTE     *Riley Johnson*

**UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**While we are waiting and preparing for Christ to appear, we are seeking, O God, to act as faithful followers. May our offerings extend the promise of salvation to people whose lives are broken by neglect, abuse, bad choices, and hurtful ways. May these gifts offer hope to all whose suffering and loss seem too heavy to bear. May our church be a listening, caring presence for all its members, and through us for all those we meet in our work and leisure. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN     NCH #154     *Go Tell it on the Mountain*

## BENEDICTION

One: Announce the good news of Jesus Christ:

Prepare the way for Christ's witness to be heard.

**Many: Christ brings hope for true peace to all people.**

**God is patiently waiting for us to claim this gift.**

One: Lead lives of holiness and godliness;

Enjoy treasures of heaven and earth that God offers.

**Many: God's Word brings us both comfort and challenge.**

**We are accepted by God and commissioned for duty.**

One: You will be fed and blessed on life's way.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit will empower you.

**Many: We turn our hearts and minds toward God.**

**We rejoice that we can be servants in Christ's name.**

Amen. **Amen.**

\*SENDING OUT AFFIRMATION                      NCH #81      *God Be With You*

Verse 1

God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you,

With a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain

Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet;

Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

## POSTLUDE

*Used by permission: One License # A-733028*

*Used by Permission. CCLI License #11387335*

## Serving in Worship Today

### Welcome Rev. Laura Evans Mahn

Rev. Laura Evans Mahn is the founder and Executive Director of NEST Café (Nourish Everyone Sustainably Together) in Rock Island. NEST Café is a nonprofit, pay-what-you-can restaurant with a mission to provide delicious, sustainably sourced food to all who enter, regardless of their ability to pay.

**Liturgist:** Mary Tallitsch

**Greeter:** Barb Hawotte

**Fellowship Hour:** Dick and Phebe Head; Marcella Park

**Audio-Visual Ministry:** Jenny Hookey, Donna Werner, Bob Tallitsch, Kathy Hobson,  
Bob Poor, MJ Poor